34. Agricultural Improvements in the Shencotta taluk

MR. A. KALYANASUNDARAM PILLAI (*Municipal Council, Shencotta*) first spoke about the necessity for improving the irrigation facilities in Shencotta taluk by enlarging the storage capacity of the tanks in the western part of the taluk and by discontinuing the practice of incurring piece-meal expenditure on tank restoration works in the eastern part of the taluk. Though it contained numerous irrigation tanks, the Shencotta taluk was labouring under agricultural disabilities. For want of sufficient storage facilities, the rain water was running wast and consequently the ryots were not assured of a successful harvest. The storage capacity of the tanks in the western part of the taluk should be increased by the acquisition of foreshore lands. The cost of acquisition would not be prohibitive so far as the western portion of the taluk was concerned. In addition, a few reservoirs should be constructed at suitable centres to be fixed by a committee under the advice of an expert engineer. In regard to the eastern portion of the taluk, the tank restoration work done in a piece-meal manner was not conducive to the permanent utility of such works. Hence an attempt should be made in the direction by concentrating attention in completing works, tank after tank and *kal* after *kal*. Though it was more than 20 years since the tank restoration scheme was put into operation, only a few works had been completed so far. Work after work should be taken up each year and after completing all the works proposed to be carried out in each tank, it should be handed over to the proper authorities for being maintained properly. Another difficulty experienced by the people was on account of the confusion caused by the dual control exercised by the P.W. and Revenue Departments over the irrigation works, under the Irrigation Regulation. This dual control should be terminated forthwith.

The Agricultural Demonstration Farm at Puliyara was located in an out of the way corner, in a place seldom resorted to by the agriculturists for fear of molestation by wild animals. The farm did not justify its existence. It did not serve any useful purpose in the line of educating the agriculturists on the improved and practical methods of agriculture. The Demonstration Farm should be made more useful by shifting it from its present site and locating it in a part of the town, where the agriculturists lived, so as to afford them facilities to go, see and get themselves acquainted with the operations conducted in the farm.

Agricultural conferences should be held every year as promised to a representation made at the 21st session of the Assembly. Since that date only one conference was held, though the necessity for it was pressed at the 24th session of the Assembly also.

Agricultural exhibitions should be held in convenient centres, preferably in the heart of the town. In reply to a representation at the 19th session of the Assembly, the then Dewan had promised to arrange for the holding of agricultural exhibitions every year.

With a view to remove the difficulties experienced in the proper working of the tank restoration scheme, in the settlement of irrigation disputes, etc., the member representing the Shencotta taluk at the 23rd session of the Assembly had suggested the formation of an Irrigation Board and the appointment of a Special Irrigation Officer. Government had agreed to the proposal. The Irrigation Board suggested by the member should be formed on the lines pointed out by him.

DEWAN'S REPLY:Mr. Kalyanasundaram Pillai. Your representation will be noted and Government will consider the points. On two points I wish to say a few words. One is about the situation of the Demonstration Farm at Puliyara. Your complaint was that it was not situated in the centre of a cultivated locality.

MEMBER: Not in the town.

DEWAN: Yes. But as you yourself said, demonstrations of the use of new kinds of manure and newly introduced agricultural implements are being made in several other centres in the taluk. That is, they are being demonstrated on lands belonging to private owners in other parts of the taluk. Is that right?

MEMBER: Yes, Sir,

DEWAN: So that, these demonstrations are conducted in other centres also. The purpose to be served by demonstration farms is to make experiments in different kinds of soils with different manures and I understand this land on which the farm is now situated, is in every way suitable for that purpose. You have different places containing different kinds of soil giving further facilities for experimenting on manures.

Then, in regard to the formation of Irrigation Boards, this subject is still under the consideration of Government. They have been waiting for legal opinion and expert opinion from the Land Revenue Department and the Agricultural Department and the matter is still under consideration. After getting the reports of these departments, Government will arrive at a decision.

35. Fisheries Department.

MR. L. A. NETTO (*Nominated*): said that the fishing industry helped to feed more than nine-tenths of the population of the State and combined with the fish trade, found work for two lakhs of people. In the State this industry was second only to agriculture. But in some respects it deserved greater attention than agriculture, at the hands of the Government in as much as the agricultural expansion of land was much limited, while the possibilities of the exploitation of aquatic products were almost illimitable. Even with the primitive methods of fishing and its derivative industries in vogue at the present day, the export of fish products worked out annually to the value of Rs. 41 lakhs. Besides, an income of Rs. one lakh and a quarter accrued to the State from customs duty and fishery receipts from backwaters.